

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

USSAGE NAKHON PHANOM

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COGARD POLAD

XMT AMEMBASSY SUVA

UNCLAS STATE 023298

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 4 EA PRESS SUMMARY

INDOCHINA

1. FOLLOWING STORY ABOUT IT IN SUNDAY NYT, WH PRESS SECY CONFIRMS PRES. SENT PERSONAL LETTER TO LON NOL PLEDGING US WOULD STAND "SIDE-BY-SIDE" WITH GKR IN FACE OF RENEWED INSURGENT EFFORT TO CAPTURE PP. LETTER, ACCORDING TO NYT, SAYS US REMAINS DETERMINED TO PROVIDE "MAXIMUM POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE " (WP; AP, PHINQ; CSM).
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2. FY 74 US MIL AND ECON AID FOR GKR INCLUDES 325 MILLION IN MIL SUPPLIES, 170 MILLION IN FOOD AND 75 MILLION OTHER ECON SUPPORT. FROM PENTAGON, CSM'S SCHMIDT QUOTES US ANALYSTS THAT FANK STEADILY IMPROVED SINCE BOMBING HALT;

THEY GIVE GKR GOOD CHANCE OF SURVIVING CURRENT PP SIEGE AND OF ACHIEVING OBJECTIVE OF PERSUADING REBELS TO NEGOTIATE A COMPROMISE. AP PP (NYDN) SEES US AID BUYING GKR TIME, QUOTES US DIPLOMATS THAT "ONLY HOPE" FOR FANK IS TO HOLD OUT UNTIL MONSOON FLOODS BATTLEFIELDS IN ABOUT 4 MONTHS. US DIPLOMATS ALSO SAY THEY BELIEVE STANDOFF COULD BRING THE 2 SIDES CLOSER TO COALITION.

3. FIELD REPORTS SAY KAF AND NAVY GUNBOATS BACK VAIN ATTEMPT BY 700 FANK TROOPS TO BREAK OUT OF TRAP ON

TONLE SAP RIVER 8 MILES NORTH OF PP. CLOSE-QUARTER FIGHTING REPORTED; POSSIBLE ESCAPE ROUTE IS BACK ACROSS RIVER (AP, SUN; WP). PP SOUTHERN AND NW FRONTS REPORTED QUIET, BUT FIELD REPORTS SAY MORE TROOPS JOIN REBEL BUILDUP, ESTIMATED AT 3000, FACING 1000 FANK TROOPS 8 MILES WEST OF PP (AP, SUN).

4. SCHANBERG (NYT) FROM "FATIGUED" PP REPORTS INHABITANTS, MOSTLY REFUGEES, WAIT NERVOUSLY FOR NEXT REBEL ATTEMPT TO CHOKE-OFF OR PENETRATE CITY. GKR AND US SUPPORTERS RELIEVED, IF NOT SLIGHTLY OPTIMISTIC, BECAUSE FANK HAS SO FAR CHECKED REBEL DRIVES TO TAKE CITY. BUT, EXHAUSTED BY WAR, PEOPLE HOPE THAT GREAT POWERS "THAT LED THEM INTO CONFLICT WILL NOW LEAD THEM OUT". WESTERN MILITARY ANALYSTS SEE CURRENT REBEL OFFENSIVE AS BIGGEST YET, BUT GKR HAS HELD DESPITE FORMER BELIEF OF "FAIR LIKELIHOOD" THAT IT WOULD NOT HOLD AFTER BOMBING HALT. FANK, THOUGH WEAKENED BY HIGH-LEVEL CORRUPTION, HAS IMPROVED WITH EXPERIENCE AND NECESSITY; REBELS SUFFERED HEAVY LOSSES FROM US BOMBING; PP, WITH ITS NATURAL DEFENSES AND BEST FANK TROOPS, IS NOT AS EASY TO TAKE AS IT SEEMED TO FRIGHTENED RESIDENTS. REBELS ARE CLOSE TO CITY BUT WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO ENTER IT TO WIN, RATHER THAN MERELY STRANGLING IT AND WAITING FOR IT TO UNCLASSIFIED

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FALL "LIKE A RIPE FRUIT". REBEL RADIO PROMISES DIRECT ASSAULT WITHIN NEXT FEW MONTHS. WESTERN ANALYSTS PREDICT ONE OR TWO MORE BIG PUSHES BEFORE JUNE, WHEN RAINS BEGIN. US ANALYSTS BELIEVE THAT GKR WILL HOLD PP AND OTHER BIG TOWNS, SO OTHER SIDE MIGHT DECIDE TO NEGOTIATE RATHER THAN FACE ENDLESS WAR. BUT NO SIGN OTHER SIDE INTERESTED IN NEGOTIATIONS. INSURGENTS CHECKED AROUND PP BUT HAVE GAINED MORE TERRITORY, KEPT ROUTE 5 TO BATTAMBANG CLOSED AND FOR MOST OF THE TIME SHUT ROUTE 4 TO KOMPONG SOM. MEKONG CARRIES MOST OF SUPPLIES, SO SOME DIPLOMATS THINK RIVER CONVOYS WILL BE TARGET AS OFFENSIVE CONTINUES. ALMOST ALL SUPPLIES PAID FOR BY US, WITH AID GROWING FROM 15 MILLION DOLS IN 1970 TO

ABOUT 600 MILLION THIS YEAR, MOSTLY FOR MIL EXPENSES. DISILLUSIONED PP RESIDENTS SEE WAR "THAT EVERYONE KNOWS HOW TO SUPPLY BUT NO ONE KNOWS HOW TO END". RISING WAR WEARINESS, FED BY INFLATION AND ECON AND SOCIAL PRESSURES SUCH AS OVERCROWDING, BECOMING POLITICAL AND CAUSING GKR UNEASINESS. STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER INTELLECTUALS LATELY SHOWING POLITICAL COURAGE, VOICING DISENCHANTMENT WITH GKR AND RISING DESIRE FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTHER SIDE.

5. US OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE 3 AFSC MEMBERS RELEASED IN QUANG NGAI, REPORTEDLY IN GOOD HEALTH, AFTER BEING HELD BY VC FOR ALMOST 2 WEEKS (AP SUN, CHITRIB; PHINQ). GVN AND COMMUNISTS AGREE TO RELEASE MORE THAN 4000 MIL AND CIV PRISONERS (CSM).

6. GVN REPORTS HEAVY FIGHTING IN QUANG DUC ALONG KHMER BORDER WITH 20 NVA/VC KIA (REUTER, NYT; CSM; AP SUN). ARVN COMMAND SAYS 30 COMMUNISTS KIA 30 MILES NORTH OF SAIGON, AND 31 KIA IN DELTA 75 MILES SW (AP, SUN).

7. SOUTHERLAND (CSM) FROM NW OF SAIGON REPORTS THAT THIEU IN TET MESSAGE CALLED FOR SHATTERING COMMUNIST MIL FORCES AND ELIMINATION OF HIDDEN AGENTS, OBSERVES THAT LOOK AT HAMLETS IN TRADITIONAL REVOLUTIONARY AREAS SHOWS HOW DIFFICULT JOB WILL BE. AT CU CHI UNCLASSIFIED

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GOVERNMENT CONTROL EVIDENT IN DAYTIME, BUT AT NIGHT GVN "LOCKS UP" AND NVA SOLDIERS, GUIDED BY LOCAL GUERRILLAS AND AGENTS, SLIP IN AND OUT WITH EASE. ASSASSINS HAVE KILLED MANY HAMLET AND VILLAGE OFFICIALS, RECENTLY INCLUDING HAMLET CHIEF IN VILLAGE OF NORTHERN ROMAN CATHOLIC REFUGEES, WHERE ONE WOULD EXPECT SECURITY TO BE TIGHTER THAN MOST PLACES. COMMUNIST RECRUITERS ENTER HAMLETS, "INVITE" YOUTHS TO MEETINGS. MILITIAMEN IN LOCAL DEFENSE POSTS DON'T VENTURE OUT, AND HAMLET DEFENSE FORCES SAY UNABLE STOP INTRUDERS WITH WHOM THEY SOMETIMES EXCHANGE SHOTS.

JAPAN

8. WP TOKYO QUOTES "INFORMED SOURCES" SAYING GOJ IS CONSIDERING SENDING REP TO US SEEKING REVISED AGENDA FOR FEB. 11 CONFERENCE, BECAUSE JAPAN FEARS MEETING MAY BE STEERED SOLELY ACCORDING TO USG WISHES, IRRITATING OIL-PRODUCING COUNTRIES. JAPAN BELIEVES RELATIONS BETWEEN OIL PRODUCING AND CONSUMING COUNTRIES SHOULD BE MAIN TOPIC OF WASHINGTON TALKS.

9. CHITRIB'S KIRK, IN TOKYO, REPORTS CONVERSATION

WITH CORRESPONDENTS BY LDP'S MIYAZAWA, IN WHICH HE OUTLINED JAPAN'S "DILEMMA" IN CONFRONTATION BETWEEN OIL PRODUCING AND CONSUMING STATES. SAID JAPAN DESIRES DEALING DIRECTLY WITH FORMER, BYPASSING WESTERN MAJORS BUT DOES NOT WISH ALIENATE WESTERN GOVT. LEADERS AND PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN BY NEGOTIATING DIRECTLY WITH ME STATES. KIRK FINDS JAPANESE CITING

WITH INCREASING FREQUENCY SUCH "RELATIVELY LITTLE KNOWN FIGURES" AS COMPARABLE AMOUNTS OF OIL USED BY THEM AND US FOR INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORTATION; SUGGESTS THESE FIGURES "INEVITABLY EXPLAIN THE PARTICULAR ANXIETY" OF JAPANESE REGARDING OIL SITUATION.

10. WSJ'S MARTIN REPORTS JAPAN'S "MUCH-PUBLICIZED BUSINESS INVASION OF BOOMING BRAZIL" ENCOUNTERING UNEXPECTED DIFFICULTIES, AS MANY BRAZILIANS GRUMBLE THAT JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN DON'T CARRY THROUGH ON UNCLASSIFIED

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PROMISES, ARE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH AND THINK ONLY OF PROFITS. NOTES VIEW OF SOME OBSERVERS, HOWEVER, THAT OVER LONG TERM JAPAN'S STAKE IN BRAZIL WILL RISE SUBSTANTIALLY, DESPITE INTERIM DIFFICULTIES.

11. IN TOKYO, LAT'S JAMESON REPORTS TRIAL OF JAPANESE NEWSMAN NISHIYAMA AND HIS GAIMUSHO GIRLFRIEND FOR OBTAINING SECRET OKINAWA DOCUMENTS AND PUBLISHING THEM. SAYS US OFFICIALS "HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED PRIVATELY" THAT SECRET AGREEMENT EXPOSED IN DOCUMENTS NISHIYAMA OBTAINED "WAS, IN FACT, FINALIZED" AND GOJ "DID, IN FACT, PAY" 4 MILLION DOLS IN CLAIMS THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN PAID BY US (FEB. 1).

THAILAND

12. ASSISTANT SEC. INGERSOLL SCHEDULED ARRIVE IN BANGKOK FROM PP MONDAY ON 3-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT (AFP, WP).

SINGAPORE

13. FOUR TERRORISTS REMAIN HOLED UP WITH 3 HOSTAGES ABOARD FERRYBOAT IN HARBOR, AS GOS CONTACTS ARAB COUNTRIES SEEKING NATION TO ACCEPT TERRORISTS (AP, SUN; PHINQ).

CHINA

14. TASS REPORTS MOSCOW DEPARTURE SUNDAY OF FIRST ILYUSHIN-62 ON NON-STOP FLIGHT INAUGURATING MOSCOW-PEKING AIR TRAVEL (AP NYDN, NYT).

15. CSM'S WOHL REPORTS EE SOURCES INDICATING MOSCOW HAS REDOUBLED EFFORTS TO HAVE WARSAW PACT OPERATIONS EXTENDED TO SOVIET REGIONS ADJACENT TO CHINA, WITH PACT MEMBERS REPORTEDLY ASKED TO STATION FORCES

ALONG CHINESE BORDERS AND PACT MANEUVERS TO BE HELD THERE AT REGULAR INTERVALS. CITES ITEM IN POLISH ARMY NEWSPAPER INDICATING POLISH FORCES HAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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MANEUVERED NEAR CHINA.

16. ADDIS ANNOUNCES ARRIVAL OF 10,000-TON WHEAT SHIPMENT FROM CHINA AS AID FOR DROUGHT-STRICKEN ETHIOPIAN AREAS (WP).

17. EXPLAINING TONGUE-IN-CHEEK TO VISITING US TRADE DELEGATION CHINA'S OIL EXPLORATION POLICY, VICE PREMIER LI HSIEN-NIEN SAID CHINESE TECHNICIANS HAVE BEEN DIRECTED TO DRILL VERY DEEP INTO EARTH, "BUT TO REFRAIN FROM DRILLING TOO DEEP SO AS NOT TO DRILL THROUGH" US (CSM). (LAUGHTER ON COAL HILL DEPT.).

HONG KONG

18. ILLINOIS OPENING FIRST FAR EAST FOREIGN TRADE OFFICE IN HK MONDAY, WITH STATE'S BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR THERE FOR CEREMONIES (AP, CHITRIB).

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

19. LAT'S MCARTHUR (FEB. 1) IN PP NOTES THAT DESPITE SHELLING AND PROXIMITY OF COMMUNIST THREAT TO POCHENTONG AIRPORT, THERE IS MORE AIR TRAFFIC THAN EVER AND BUSINESS PROCEEDS AS USUAL. AND IF PEOPLE ARE LEAVING PP - AND MANY ARE - AN ALMOST EQUAL NUMBER SEEM TO BE FLYING IN. CITES AIRLINE OFFICIAL THAT FOR A WHILE, PEOPLE COULDN'T GET EXIT VISAS; NOW ALMOST ANYBODY THAT WANTS ONE CAN HAVE IT. SOME INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES CANCELED KHMER STOP BUT AIR VIETNAM AND AIR CAMBODIA MAINTAIN NEARLY DAILY SERVICES TO SAIGON AND BANGKOK; THEY ALMOST NEVER CANCEL OUT FOR SECURITY REASONS, THOUGH SOME FLIGHTS SCRUBBED RECENTLY BECAUSE OF FUEL SHORTAGE. AIR FRANCE ALSO MAINTAINS SCHEDULE BUT FREQUENTLY CANCELS OUT IF IT FEELS SITUATION IS UNSAFE. WHILE INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS HAVE DECLINED, WAR HAS GIVEN RISE TO MORE DOMESTIC FLYING AND NEW LOCAL AIRLINES SPROUT UP AS NEEDED - MOSTLY MANNED BY FRENCH, BRITISH, AUSTRALIAN AND AMERICAN PILOTS. CRAFTS CROWDED ON TARMAC USUALLY INCLUDE AMERICAN PLANES WITH SVIET MARKINGS; VNAF FLIGHTS DO MOST

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OF THE EMERGENCY AIRLIFT OF AMMO AND SHORT-SUPPLY
ITEMS FROM STOCKS AROUND SAIGON. T-28S PILOTED
BY CAMBODIANS HAVE BEEN FLYING STRIKES AGAINST TARGETS
WITHIN 10-MILES RANGE. FOR THE MOMENT, NOBODY APPEARS
TO FEEL POCHENTONG IS IN REAL DANGER.

20. LAT'S JAMESON (FEB. 1) IN TOKYO REPORTS GAIMUSHO
SPOKESMAN KURODA AS DISCLOSING THAT NEWLY APPROVED
GOJ AID PROJECTS, MAINL

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